of National Food for Work Programme. Since, the programme has been launched almost seven months ago, there were some initial implementation related problems being faced by the implementing/executing agencies. Gradually the implementing agencies are picking up and pace of utilization of resources has also increased. Any report of irregularity is taken seriously and the facts of the case are immediately obtained from the concerned State Government and are asked to take corrective action.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill, 2004

1067. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Trade Unions have rejected the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill, 2004;

(b) what are the issues that have been diluted from the initial draft;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Bill placed before Parliament does not contain time-bound extension of irreversible guarantee to the whole country, payment of statutory minimum wages, universal entitlement of job guarantee etc; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL): (a) to (c) This Ministry has not received any communication from any of the Central Trade Unions regarding their rejection of the NREG Bill, 2004. The Bill in its present formulation and as introduced in the Lok Sabha does not contain time-bound extension of irreversible guarantee to the whole country and universal entitlement of job guarantee. The Bill, however, provides for payment of statutory minimum wages as fixed by the State Government for agricultural labourers.

(d) The proposed legislation constitutes a pioneering endeavour to secure wage employment for the poor households in the rural areas as a guaranteed entitlement to the extent of atleast 100 days in a financial year and so, needs to be implemented in a phased manner based on experience.